

Item #: _____

Moved by: _____

Prepared by: LaKeetha Barnes

Seconded by: _____

Reviewed by: Marcy Ingram

RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF ALL PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYEES IN
SHELBY COUNTY EARNING A MINIMUM WAGE OF AT LEAST \$15 PER
HOUR. SPONSORED BY COMMISSIONER EDDIE S. JONES, JR AND
COMMISSIONER WILLIE F. BROOKS, JR.

WHEREAS, Every worker deserves to earn a living wage, enough to provide for themselves and their families without going into debt or depending on charity or public assistance; and

WHEREAS, Public institutions have a responsibility to be ethical leaders in our community, modeling the best democratic ideals, including treating workers with dignity and paying a wage sufficient to keep workers out of poverty rather than trapping them in it; and

WHEREAS, The County Commissioners believe that, “limited public dollars should not be subsidizing poverty-wage work. When subsidized employers are allowed to pay workers less than a living wage, tax payers end up footing a double bill: the initial subsidy and then the food stamps, emergency medical, housing and other social services low wage workers may require to support themselves and their families even minimally¹,” and

WHEREAS, Memphis is among the poorest cities in the nation², low wages cause poverty both directly and indirectly when workers trapped in poverty are unable to access education and other opportunities, and “the curse of poverty has no justification in our age³”; and

WHEREAS, Raising wages expands workers’ access, boosts spending and spurs economic growth⁴; and

¹“Building Power in Our Workplaces and Neighborhoods.” ACORN. Accessed 11/29/2018. <http://livingwagecampaign.org/>

² “America’s 11 Poorest Cities.” CBS News. Accessed 1/26/2019. <https://www.cbsnews.com/media/americas-11-poorest-cities/>

³ Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos of Community. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

⁴ <https://edlabor.house.gov/imo/media/doc/FactSheet-RaisingTheMinimumWageIsGoodForWorkers,Businesses,andTheEconomy-FINAL.pdf>

WHEREAS, Memphis City and Shelby County employees and some Shelby County Schools employees have seen their minimum wage raised to \$15 per hour; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 300 employees at Shelby County Schools, 335 employees at the University of Memphis and many workers at University of Tennessee Health Science Center and South West Community College currently earn less than \$15 per hour, which is not a livable wage; and

WHEREAS, It is the desire of this Commission to advocate for the dignity of Shelby County residents and in the best interest of the economy of Shelby County.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF SHELBY COUNTY, TENNESSEE, That the County Commission supports all public servants earning a minimum living wage of \$15 per hour.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the County Commission commends the initial steps taken by Shelby County Schools and the other public institutions of higher learning, like University of Memphis, to raise their employees' minimum wage and urges same to follow through with raising all of their employee wages to a minimum of \$15 per hour; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the County Commission invites all public servants holding office in Shelby County to join this call.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That this Resolution shall become effective in accordance with the Shelby County Charter, Article II, Section 2.06 (B), the public welfare requiring same.

Lee Harris
County Mayor

Date: _____

ATTEST:

Clerk of County Commission

ADOPTED: _____